Defective weights and measures

*26. SHRI KALPNATH RAI:†

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to an official survey consumers are cheated to the extent of about Rs. 1600 crores annually through defective weights and measures;

(b) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the survey conducted by the Mahila Dakshata Samiti, Delhi, to the effect that 25 to 30 per cent of food articles sold in the Capital are adulterated and that even household appliances are sub-standard; and

(c) if so what remedial measures have been taken by Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) No official survey has been made in this regard.

(b) According to the report submitted by the Mahila Dakshata Samiti 20—30 per cent of food articles sold in the Capital are adulterated.

(c) The Department of Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA), Delhi Administration has intensified enforcement of the Prevention of Food Adulteration (PFA) Act, 1954 in Delhi and offenders selling adulterated articles of food are punished under the provisions of the Act. The State Governments and Union Territory Administrations are advised from time to time to vigorously enforce the Weights and Measures Laws to prevent the use of defective weights and measures. In addition, the Central Government has taken steps to promote strong consumer protection movement in the country. Brochures have also been issued on Adulteration and Packaged commodities for education of consumers.

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Kalpnath Rai.

श्री कल्पनाथ राय : क्या सरकार सर्वे कराएगी कि हमारे देश के अन्दर वेट्स एण्ड मेजर्स में कितनी धांधली हो रही है? वैट्स एण्ड मेजर्स के जो निरीक्षक हैं और जो सामान बेचने वाले हैं उनके बीच जो एक मिलीभगत है जिसके कारण कि चीजों में मिलावट होती है कम सामान दिया जाता है तो कितने निरीक्षकों के खिलाफ सरकार ने पिछले 5 वर्षों में कार्यवाही की है यह मैं सरकार से जानना चाहूंगा? क्या सरकार कन्जूमर्स की तरफ से भी कोई काउंसिल बनाएगी जो कि सामान बेचने वालों और सामानों का निरीक्षण करने वालों के ऊपर निगरानी कर सके।

SHRI AJIT PANJA: The question has two parts. So far as the first part is concerned in regard to the Government making a survey, it is not necessary at present because the Standard Weights and Measures Act, 1956 has been modified taking into consideration the various reports coming in and the cases which have been booked. Again, in 1976 the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976 was passed by Parliament. Thereafter in 1985 in order that loopholes can be plugged and proper steps taken, another Act was brought into force, like the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1985. Therefore, at present no survey is required. As regards the action taken, I can give you certain figures for year information. In Delhi in 1985 the number of persons convicted was 712; the number of persons acquitted 40; and, the total number of cases registered in January, 1986 is 147.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question Hour over.